Why Learning Another Language is Important

Starring
** Madame Crosby **

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January 2024

Once upon a time at Cantigny Park outside of Chicago, the kids and I met up with my high school French teacher. (This is normal – I am pen pals with a friend from kindergarten & an 8th grade biology teacher among other assorted characters from my past, so the kids are super used to Chicago-style enmeshment.)

LIFE HACK: Never accept *anything* that a 5-year-old tries to hand to you when they come out of the bathroom.

This lovely high school French teacher was unfamiliar with the wiles of small children, and so she unwittingly accepted the offering proffered by said 5-year-old upon his exit from the bathroom.

As the lovely, kind French teacher calmly held a speck of whatever-it-was (I couldn't quite see) in her hand, she asked "What's this?"

"A roly-poly!" the 5-year-old replied. Instead of dropping it immediately, she turned to me and asked: "What's that?"

Wikipedia tells us that there are many names for Armadillidiidae,* including: woodlice, slater bug, cheesy bug, butcher boy, cellar bug, pissebed, cloporte, parsons or little pig, bench biters, & potato bug.

US variants include sowbug, doodlebug, carpenter, & chuckie pig.

I recalled my aunt from Minnesota (a home state shared by the French teacher) using a specific alternative term and, with a grimace on my face for being the bearer of unwelcome news,
I said: “It’s also known as a pill-bug.” She immediately yelped & chucked the roly-poly over her shoulder. (It’s *fine*, they have shells.)

In conclusion, please remember to absolutely never accept anything a 5-year-old has found on the floor of a public bathroom & do brush up on your fluency in multiple Midwestern dialects. You never know when they'll come in handy!
Oh, and probably learn French, too, to be more worldly! À bientôt!

This zine is dedicated to the now 6-year-old whose favorite story is: "Remember that time I handed your French teacher a roly-poly and she didn't know what it was!?!? And then she SCREAMED?! So loud!" Followed by endless, gleeful cackling.

*They are apparently terrestrial crustaceans, which is both mildly terrifying & very cool.